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2000/2001



Alberta
SOLICITOR GENERAL

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Grants totaling \$1,344,618 were provided to 57 victim assistance programs in fiscal year 2000/01.
- 81% of grant funds, for a total of \$1,082,290, were provided to police based (RCMP and municipal) programs.
- Community programs and projects received a total of \$262,328 in grants.
- As of April 1, 2001, Alberta's network of police based victim assistance programs consisted of 69 programs operating 104 victim service units.
- Victim service programs reported handling 29,274 new cases. Over half (56.5%) involved assisting victims of violent crime.
- Programs reported providing services to 38,096 people in 2000/01, of which 31,327 (82%) were adults and 6,769 (18%) were children.
- The type of assistance most frequently provided for new and ongoing cases was information.
- Approximately 1,506 volunteer advocates and Board members contributed a total of 200,532 volunteer hours.
- Providing general assistance (information, crisis intervention and referrals), accounted for the majority of volunteers' time.
- A total of 2,555 victim impact statements were completed by victims of crime and, of those, 2,127 were filed with the Court once charges were laid.
- Victim impact statements were most often completed and filed in cases of common assault, sexual assault and domestic assault.
- During the year, 1,390 requests for restitution were completed and returned to the police. Of these, 1,284 were forwarded to the Crown. The majority of requests concerned non-violent crimes.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

History

The *Victims' Programs Assistance Act*, proclaimed January 16, 1991, established the Victims Programs Assistance Fund and provided for the appointment of a Victims Programs Assistance Committee. The Committee was established to review grant applications for programs and services that benefit victims of crime and to make recommendations respecting funding to the Solicitor General and Attorney General of Alberta.

The *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)* was proclaimed August 1, 1997, for all provisions of the *Act*, except those directly associated with the delivery of financial benefits to individual victims of crime. On November 1, 1997, the financial benefits section was proclaimed. The *Victims of Crime Act* replaced the *Victims' Programs Assistance Act* and *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act*, and established the authority to collect surcharges of 15% on provincial statute offences.

A Fund into which provincial and federal surcharges are collected and deposited was also established under *VOCA*. Section 10 of the *Act* provides for payments from the Fund. Expenditures include grants approved by the Solicitor General, costs incurred by the Victims of Crime Programs Committee, the Criminal Injuries Appeal Board, expenses to persons whose services are engaged by the Solicitor General, and financial benefits payable to victims of crime for injuries suffered. Salaries, benefits and other expenditures related to the administration of the *Act* are also paid from the Fund.

The *Act* includes principles respecting the treatment of victims and establishes rights for victims to obtain certain information.

An office of the Director, *VOCA*, was created. This office operates within the Public Security Division, under the Department of the Solicitor General, and is responsible for the administration of the *Act*. Victims who do not feel they have been treated in accordance with the principles of the *Act* can obtain information from this office as to how to resolve their concerns.

Two core programs operate under *VOCA* - a financial benefits program for individual victims who have suffered injury as a result of a criminal offence, and a grants program that provides funding to groups and organizations offering information, assistance and support to victims during their involvement in the criminal justice process.

The *Act* established the Victims of Crime Programs Committee appointed by the Solicitor General. The Committee evaluates applications for grants to programs and makes recommendations to the Solicitor General on grant funding. Funding decisions made by the Solicitor General are based upon the Committee's recommendations.

OF VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT 20

11/11/11

The Victim Rights Act 2000 was introduced in the House of Representatives on 11/11/11. The Act was introduced by the Minister for Justice, the Hon. David Young. The Act was introduced in response to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Police and the Department of Justice. The Act was introduced to provide for the rights of victims of crime and to provide for the rights of victims of crime.

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❧ VICTIMS OF CRIME ❧ PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Committee Members

The Committee consists of four members, with two members representing the community at-large, one member representing police and one member representing government.

Members during 2000/2001 were:

Mr. Richard Smedstad (Chairman) – member-at-large, Sherwood Park, Alberta;

Sgt. Mona Jorgensen (Calgary Police Service) – representing police;

Ms. Diane Wickenheiser – member-at-large, Hays, Alberta;

Mr. Peter Teasdale (Alberta Justice) – representing government

Committee Staff Support

The Manager of Victims Programs provides advice and support to the Committee. As well, the Manager provides information about the grants program to interested groups and organizations, screens applications and acts as a liaison between the Committee and grant applicants.

Committee Meetings

Meetings are scheduled twice per year to evaluate grant applications submitted for the April 1st and October 1st application deadlines. The Committee met on June 8, 2000, and December 7, 2000. Thirty-six new grant applications were evaluated by the Committee and 35 applications were approved for funding by the Solicitor General.

❧ FUNDING AGREEMENTS ❧

Programs approved for funding are required to enter into agreements that outline terms and conditions to be met. In accordance with the agreement, funded programs are required to submit quarterly statistics, financial statements and an evaluation report upon expiry of their funding term.

Grant Funding Formula

On October 1, 1999, a new grant funding formula was introduced to help ensure that grant monies are allocated fairly and equitably throughout the province. The formula is used to calculate a base-funding amount for eligible programs. The formula:

- Allocates a specified amount from the Victims of Crime Fund to police based programs that provide basic services, and
- Utilizes a per crime amount that has been calculated using violent crime statistics from Uniform Crime Report data submitted to the Department of the Solicitor General by all police services.

Police based programs may receive additional funding if any of the following discretionary factors apply:

- large geographical area/low population density
- unique demographics
- weaker economic base
- lack of other support services
- new programs/projects
- other special circumstances that may be identified by the applicant.

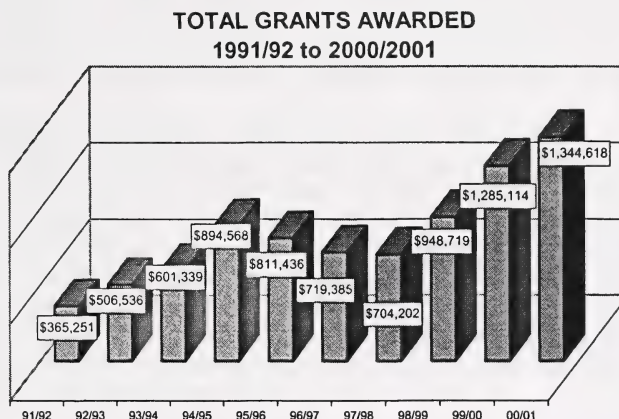
Eligible specialized community programs/projects that benefit victims during the criminal justice process and are non-police based are also eligible for discretionary funding.

Eligible programs may receive a minimum grant of \$2,000 and a maximum of \$75,000 per year.

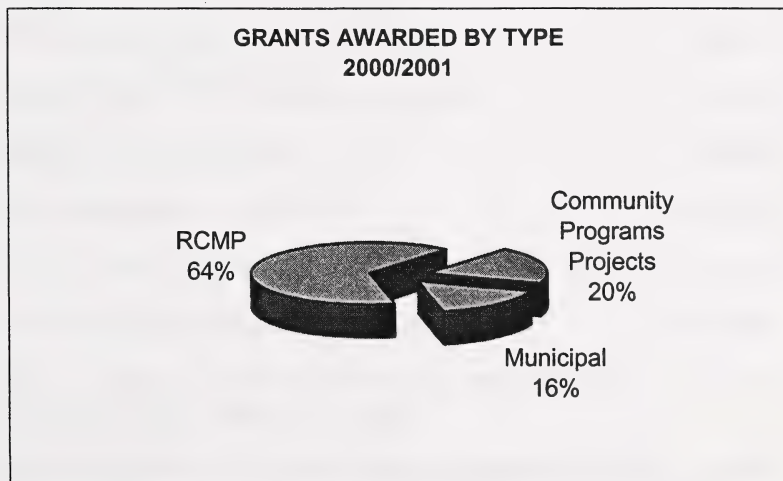
2000/2001 was the second year that eligible programs received three-year grant funding commitments allowing them to budget for the future. To be considered eligible, an established program must have operated successfully for three years in a partnership with Alberta Solicitor General, met the conditions of previous funding agreements, and demonstrated sound management practices.

Grants Provided

Grants totaling \$1,344,618 were provided to 57 programs for the 2000/2001 year. This amount represents a 5% increase in grant funding over 1999/2000 (Figure 1). Of the 57 programs receiving funding, 35 were awarded grants for a one year term, while the remaining 22 programs were awarded multi-year funding in 1999/2000 and received their second year installments.

Figure 1

Grants to police based victim assistance programs accounted for 80.5%, or \$1,082,290, of the total grants allocated in 2000/2001. Of that amount, \$867,110 or 64.5%, was provided to RCMP affiliated victim service units and the remaining \$215,180 (16%) was provided to municipal police services.

Figure 2

Police based programs have received funding priority, however, other community groups and organizations that provide services to victims have also received funding. Community programs received 20% of the total grant funds provided, or \$262,328.

Police Based Programs

As a result of community support and grants from the Victims of Crime Fund, a network of police based victim assistance programs has been established that provides access to services for victims in over 85% of the province (Appendix A). As of April 2001, there are 69 police based victims programs operating a total of 104 victims service units in Alberta.

Services provided to victims include intervention and support, information about their case and criminal justice proceedings, information about medical, legal and social services that can help, referrals to other community agencies, and court room orientation and accompaniment. These programs also provide victims of crime with information and assistance in completing victim impact statements, requesting restitution and applying for financial benefits. Police based programs provide a continuum of services to victims from the time of first response by police to the disposition of the case by the Courts, and provide services in accordance with provincial guidelines.

The following grants were awarded to police based programs in 2000/2001:

<i>Airdrie & District Victim Assistance Society</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>
<i>Bonnyville RCMP Victim Services Unit</i>	<i>\$7,250</i>
<i>Brooks & District Victims' Assistance Association</i>	<i>\$19,000</i>
<i>Chinook Arch Victim's Services Society</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>
<i>Coaldale Police Victim Assistance Services</i>	<i>\$3,500</i>
<i>Cold Lake Victim Services</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>
<i>Crisis Association of Vegreville</i>	<i>\$10,900</i>
<i>Fairview Victim Assistance Association</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>
<i>Foothills Regional Victim Services Association</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>
<i>High Level Community Policing Society (formerly with Northwest Alberta Resource Society)</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>
<i>High Prairie & District RCMP Victims Assistance Society</i>	<i>\$40,000</i>
<i>Highway 43 RCMP Victim Services (formerly Mayerthorpe and Whitecourt area)</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>
<i>Hinton District Victim Services Program</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>

<i>Lethbridge Detachment Victim Assistance Society</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>
<i>Lethbridge Police Service Victim Services Unit</i>	<i>\$36,080</i>
<i>Lloydminster Regional Victim Services Program</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>
<i>Peace River Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>
<i>Redwater & District Victim Services Unit</i>	<i>\$12,000</i>
<i>Rocky & District Victim Services Unit Society</i>	<i>\$18,500</i>
<i>Slave Lake Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>
<i>Southern Alberta Victims' Assistance Association (SAVA)</i>	<i>\$45,000</i>
<i>St. Albert Victim Services Association</i>	<i>\$18,000</i>
<i>St. Paul and Area Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$27,000</i>
<i>Strathmore Regional Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>
<i>Taber/Vauxhall Victims Services Unit</i>	<i>\$9,000</i>
<i>Two Hills and Area Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$8,000</i>
<i>Vulcan Regional Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>
<i>Wabasca Regional Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>
<i>Wetaskiwin and District Victim Services Society</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>
Total	\$549,230

In addition to the grants listed above, the Victims of Crime Fund also supported the following police based programs which were awarded grants for two or three year terms in 1999/2000:

- ♦ *Barrhead Community Victim Services Unit Association*
- ♦ *Battle River Victim Assistance Society*
- ♦ *Big Country Victim Services Association*
- ♦ *Bow Valley Victim Services Association*
- ♦ *Calgary Police Service Victim Assistance Unit*
- ♦ *Cardium Region Victim Services Unit*
- ♦ *Cochrane and Area Victim Services Society*
- ♦ *Edmonton Police Service Victim Service Unit*
- ♦ *Edson and District Victim Services Society*
- ♦ *Fort McMurray Victim Services Society*

- ♦ *Volunteer Programs Association – Fort Saskatchewan*
- ♦ *Grande Prairie & District RCMP Victims Assistance Program Association*
- ♦ *Lac La Biche RCMP Victim Services Unit*
- ♦ *Leduc & District Victim Assistance Society*
- ♦ *Medicine Hat Police service Victim Assistance Unit*
- ♦ *Sherwood Park RCMP Victim Services Unit*
- ♦ *Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District*
- ♦ *Victim Service Unit – Sturgeon Region*
- ♦ *Tofield Area Victims Service Association*
- ♦ *Westlock Community Victim services Unit*

Total **\$ 533,060**

Total Grants Provided to Police Based Programs in 2000/2001 **\$1,082,290**

Community Programs

Non-police based, or community programs usually offer more specialized services. Grants may be awarded to programs that provide specialized services to victims of a particular type of crime, for example, domestic violence, or may be awarded on a one-time basis for projects. Grants were awarded to the following groups in 2000/2001:

Alberta Police-Based Victim Services Association **\$75,000**

The grant was awarded to fund the development, implementation and evaluation of mentoring and initial basic training for new Victim Services Coordinators, as well as assessment, development, implementation and evaluation of on-going professional development for all Victim Service Coordinators and others involved in providing service to victims of crime.

Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse **\$30,000**

Funding was provided for the continuation of court preparation services provided to child victims of crime through the Child Witness Court Preparation Program. The Program assists victimized children to testify truthfully and effectively in court primarily through group sessions. Individual sessions are also provided for those children with special needs. The program assists children in Calgary and the surrounding area.

Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre **\$15,000**

The grant was awarded to provide 30 hours/week of crisis intervention, accompaniment to the RCMP to report the incident, court preparation, and court and hospital accompaniment. The Centre also provides support and education in the area of sexual assault and referrals to appropriate agencies.

Partner Support Program (Discovery House) \$29,828

Funding was provided to allow for the continuation of the Partner Support Program which was developed in collaboration with the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter and the YWCA Sheriff King Family Support Centre. The program provides victims of domestic violence with information regarding community resources and support, with the goal of increasing the victim's safety and increasing their capacity to make changes in their own best interests.

Protection and Restraining Order Project (PROP) \$25,000

Funding was awarded for the continued provision of legal support to low income domestic violence victims. Services offered include assistance in obtaining a restraining order, developing safety plans to ensure the clients' and their children's safety, and referrals to other agencies providing support to victims of domestic abuse. The program serves victims in the Edmonton, St. Albert, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, Leduc and Stony Plain areas.

NOVA 2001 Conference \$50,000

A grant was awarded to the Edmonton Police Service Steering Committee to assist with the organization of the National Organization of Victims Assistance 2001 Conference held in Edmonton. The conference hosted 2,500 delegates from law enforcement, criminal justice and victim services agencies throughout the province, Canada and the United States. The conference increased awareness of the issues and concerns of victims, profiled legislation and provided information about programs and services that assist victims.

Total \$224,828

In addition, a Victims of Crime Fund grant also supported the **Edmonton John Howard Society Victim Assistance Program**, which received a grant for a three year term in 1999/2000.

Total Grants Provided to Community Programs in 2000/2001 \$262,328

Total Grants Provided in 2000/2001 \$1,344,618

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Introduction

Information on the activities of victims service programs was collected using the Quarterly Report form. The Report collects information on the number of new cases, the number of persons assisted, and the type of assistance provided. For each of these variables, the Report categorizes assistance provided as either *Criminal Code – Violent* (e.g. homicide, violent sex offences, serious assaults, etc.), *Criminal Code – Non-violent* (e.g. forgery, fraud, break and enter, etc.), *Offence Non-criminal* (offences that do not fall within the *Criminal Code of Canada*, i.e., Provincial Statute Offences) or *Assistance – No offence* (e.g. sudden death, notifying next-of-kin, motor vehicle collisions, suicide, etc.).

The Report also measures the use of volunteer hours, the number of victim impact statements completed and filed with the Court, and the number of restitution requests completed and forwarded to the Crown prosecutor's office.

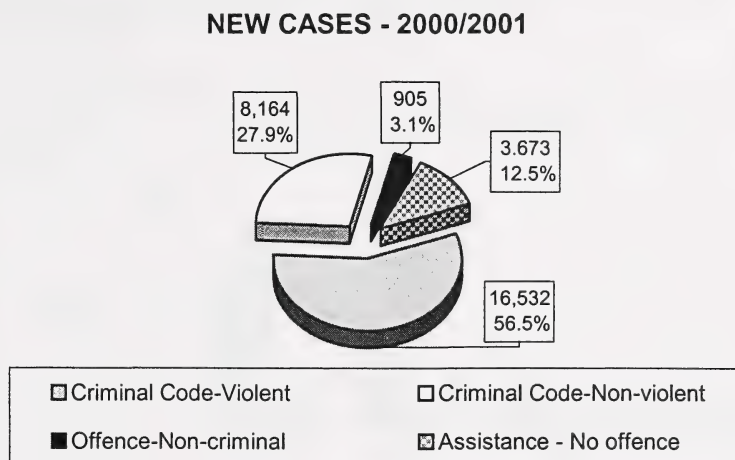
The statistics reported herein were collected from 91 police based victim service units that submitted a full year's data and six police based victim service units that submitted data for part of the 2000/2001 fiscal year. As well, five community-based programs submitted statistics for that year.

Only programs funded by Alberta Solicitor General are required under their funding agreements to submit these statistics, although some non-funded programs also submit them. Data was submitted for only part of the year in cases where units were only operational for part of the year or only funded for part of the year.

New Cases

During 2000/2001 victim service programs reported handling 29,274 new cases. New cases refers only to those cases (files) opened during the reporting quarter. A case may involve one or more victims, and family members or friends affected by an incident of crime.

Figure 3

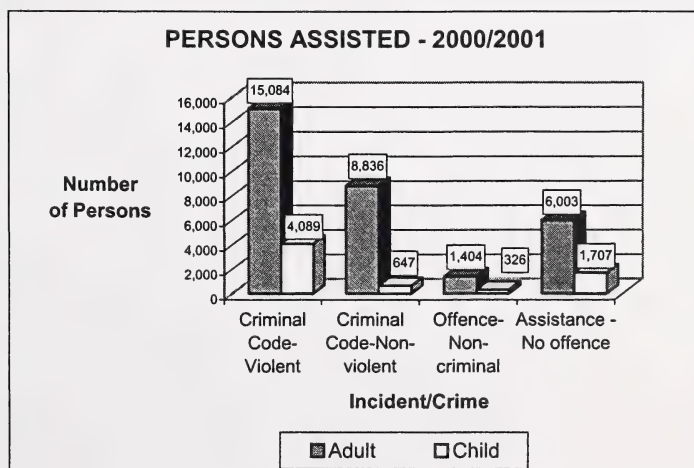


Of the 29,274 new cases, over half (56.5%) involved assisting victims of violent *Criminal Code* offences (Figure 3). Assistance was least often provided when the offence was Non-criminal (i.e., a Provincial Statute Offence).

Persons Assisted

Programs reported providing assistance to 38,096 people in 2000/2001, of which 31,327 (82%) were adults and 6,769 (18%) were children. Half of people assisted (50.3%) were victims of a *Criminal Code – Violent* offence, followed by people assisted in the *Criminal Code – Non-violent* category (24.9%) (Figure 4).

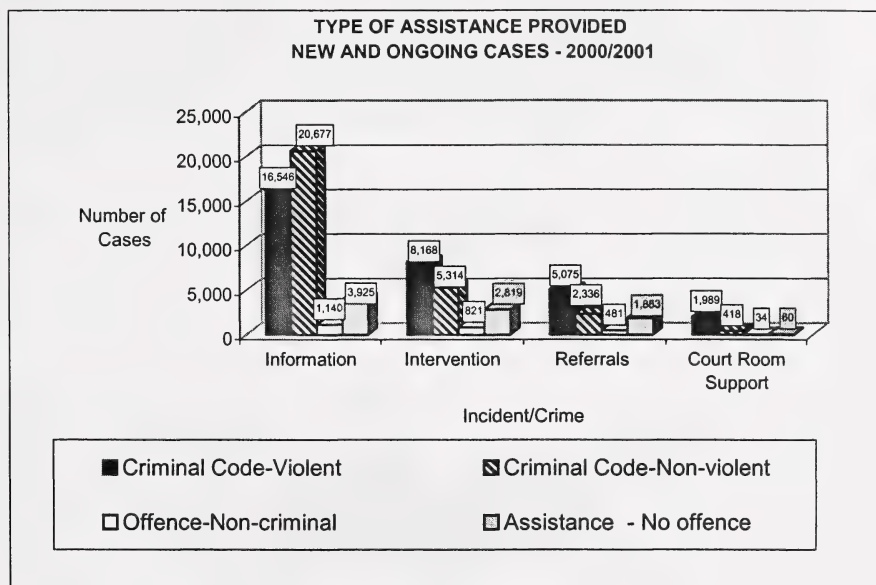
Figure 4



Type of Assistance

The type of assistance most frequently provided for new and ongoing cases was information. Intervention, which includes crisis response, notification of next of kin or practical assistance at a crime scene, was the second most common type of assistance provided, followed by referrals to other agencies, while court room support was provided in the least number of cases, whether new or ongoing (Figure 5).

Figure 5



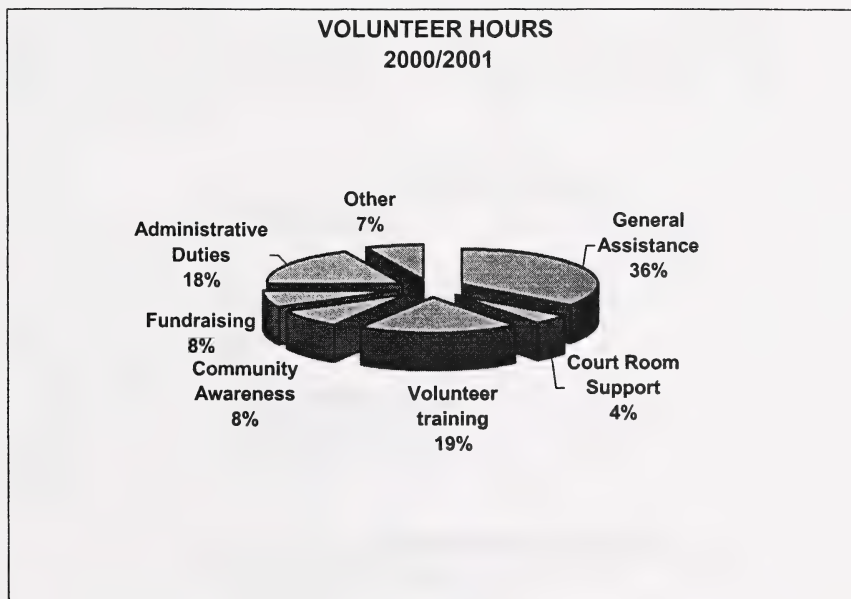
Assistance was most often provided when the incident/offence was in the *Criminal Code – Violent* category. Assistance was least likely to be provided where the incident/offence was in the *Offence – Non-criminal* category.

Volunteer Hours

In 2000/2001, approximately 1,506 volunteer advocates and Board members contributed a total of 200,532 volunteer hours, which equates to 102 people working full time for a one year period. This figure also includes hours volunteered by program staff over and above their paid time. During the same year, on average, programs employed 42 full-time and 51 part-time paid staff.

Providing general assistance (information, intervention and referrals) to victims accounted for 36% of volunteer time. Nineteen percent of volunteer hours were dedicated to training, followed closely by administrative duties, at 18%. The remaining hours were spent on community awareness (8%), fundraising (8%), other activities, such as meetings and travel time (7%), and court room support (4%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6



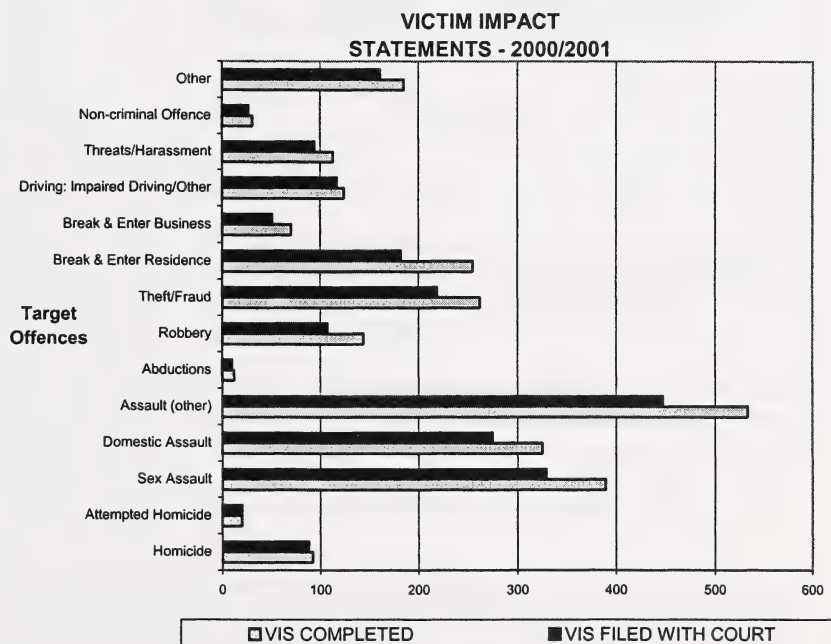
ALBERTA SOLICITOR GENERAL INITIATIVES

Victim Impact Statement Program

The Victim Impact Statement Program provides victims in Alberta with the opportunity to have input into sentencing by describing in writing, to the Court, how they have been affected by the crime.

Police notify all victims of crime of this opportunity and provide information about the nearest victim service unit, where the victim impact statement form and assistance in completing it can be obtained. The completed statements are returned to the police or victim service unit, who review the statement and forward it to the Crown prosecutor. As of December 1, 1999, victims have the option of reading their statements aloud in court. If the victim has chosen to do so, the police or victim services notify the victim of the court dates for sentencing. Prior to sentencing, the Court is required to inquire if the victim has been advised of the opportunity to prepare a statement and may adjourn proceedings to permit the victim to prepare a statement.

Figure 7

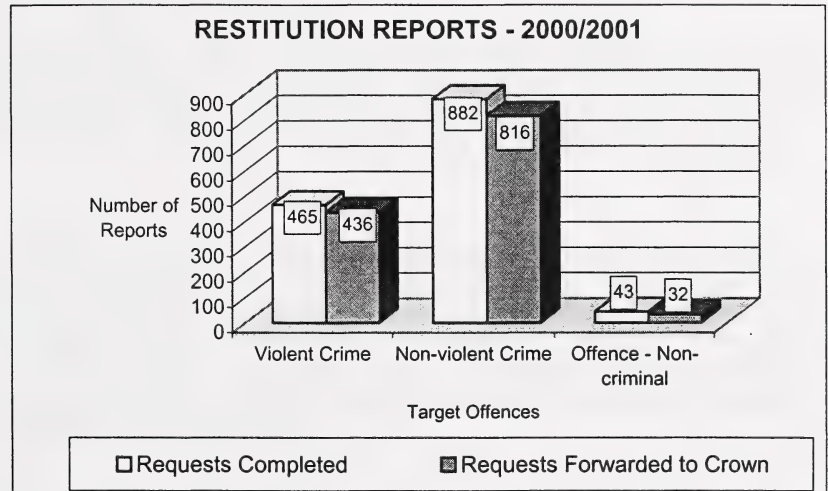


In the 2000/2001 reporting period, a total of 2,555 statements were completed and 2,127 statements were filed with the Court, an increase of 14% and 17%, respectively from 1999/00. Of these statements, a significant portion concerned common assault, sexual assault and domestic assault (Figure 7). *Note: The difference in number completed and number filed occurs because a charge must be laid before statements can be filed with the Court.*

Requesting Restitution Program

The Requesting Restitution Program provides victims of crime who have suffered a financial loss, with information about how they can request that the offender pay restitution. A crime victim may complete a Request for Restitution Form provided by the police officer investigating the case or a victim support worker. Once the form is completed, the victim returns it to police, who forward it to the Crown prosecutor. The Crown prosecutor may make the application for restitution to the Court, or may decline to do so. If the Crown declines, the victim may request the Court to do so on its own motion.

Figure 8



Restitution may be ordered for damage, destruction and loss of property, bodily harm, expenses incurred in moving out of the offender's house, as in spousal abuse cases, or for losses incurred by unknowingly purchasing or lending money on stolen property.

For the 2000/2001 year, 1,390 requests for restitution were completed and returned to police and 1,284 were then forwarded to the Crown, which represents an increase of 28% and 31%, respectively from 1999/2000. The majority of the requests for restitution concerned non-violent crime, with the next largest category being violent crime (Figure 8).

Victim Assistance Coordinator Training

The Victim Assistance Coordinators' Training was held February 26th to March 2nd, 2001. Forty-seven victim program coordinators and police members attended the training sessions at the Alberta Justice Staff College. Thirteen Crown prosecutors, Correctional Services and Court Services staff also attended.

The training provides information about the criminal justice system, federal and provincial legislation concerning victims of crime and information on related programs to assist victims in Alberta.

***Victim
Awareness
Training and
Handbook***

To increase awareness of issues and concerns respecting victims of crime and to facilitate dialogue among those who work with victims, Alberta Solicitor General, Alberta Justice and Alberta Community Development facilitated the development of a training module by conducting victim awareness training pilot projects in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton. Crown prosecutors, criminal justice staff and community agencies participated and provided feedback. Based upon an evaluation of the piloted projects, a community-centred interactive victim awareness training module was developed to be implemented Crown prosecutor's offices throughout the province.

To supplement victim awareness training and to provide a "hands-on" resource manual, a Handbook was produced and distributed to Crown prosecutors throughout the province. As well, the Handbook was distributed to other agencies and organizations participating in the training.

***Quarterly
Report
Form***

Since April 1, 1998, victim service programs have been required to complete the Victim Services Quarterly Report. This statistical collection form provides Alberta Solicitor General with information about services provided to victims and acts as a measure of accountability for grant monies awarded. The Quarterly Report has standardized the reporting process and improved the quality of information collected about services provided to victims in Alberta.

Brochures

A series of brochures designed to increase awareness of programs available to victims of crime and to provide specific information on victim impact statements, restitution and financial benefits is distributed to police services, victim services units and other agencies that provide assistance to victims of crime.

APPENDIX A

ALBERTA POLICE BASED
VICTIM SERVICE UNITS



CONTACT US

To obtain copies of brochures or for any other information, contact
Alberta Solicitor General at:

Victims Programs
Public Security Division
10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building
10365 – 97 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3W7
Phone: (780) 427-3460 (local calls) or
310-0000 (toll-free within Alberta)

or through our web-site at <http://www.gov.ab.ca/just/pub/publ.htm>.

CONTACT US

To learn more about our services, please contact us at 1-800-555-1234 or visit our website at www.1-800-555-1234.com.

1-800-555-1234
1234 Main Street
Suite 100
Anytown, NY 12345
Phone: (703) 555-1234
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